SALLnet – South African Limpopo Landscapes Network

Seminar

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Typology of small-scale farmers in southern Africa and implications for policy design

Smallholder farms in South Africa are highly heterogeneous in terms of types of farming, levels of productivity and commercialization. These heterogeneous groups of smallholder farming systems require different forms of government interventions, depending on the objective and characteristics of each group. To create accurate, target-group oriented policy measures, a crucial pre-requisite is to understand the structure of the addressed group of farmers in a comprehensive and objective way. Therefore, the aim of our analysis is to investigate the typologies of small-scale farmers in Limpopo province of South Africa based on a wide range of objective variables regarding their personal, farm and context characteristics, which support an effective, target-group-specific design and communication of policies. For this, a cluster analysis is conducted on the basis of a comprehensive survey among 212 small-scale farmers in the Limpopo region in 2019. An unsupervised machine learning approach with Partitioning Around Medoids (PAM) for the subsequent clustering was used.

The classification of the farming systems and the main drivers of diversities provide an entry point to analyze the current policy implications and develop the strategies based on the specific characteristics of each farm type.

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Online